

Message Text

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21

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-04 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 NIC-01

SCCT-01 SAB-01 /089 W

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R 030931Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3932

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USUN NEW YORK 683

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5823

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO SP SS PBOR

SUBJECT: MORE REPORTS OF INCIDENTS IN SPANISH SAHARA

REF: RABAT 5785; NOUAKCHOTT 1856

1. ISTIQLAL DAILY L'OPINION REPORTED DECEMBER 1 ON SEVERAL INCIDENTS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN SAHARA SINCE SABOTAGE OF PHOSPHATE CONVEYOR BELT THERE. ACCORDING TO PAPER, 15 SPANISH SOLDIERS WERE KILLED IN AN ACTION AT JDAIRIA ON NOVEMBER 11. FIVE "NATIONALIST MILITANTS" DIED DURING FIGHTING AND THREE OTHERS WERE KILLED IN COLD BLOOD AFTER BEING TAKEN PRISONER, ACCORDING TO L'OPINION. PAPER ALSO REPORTED INCIDENT WHICH TOOK PLACE NEAR BIR OUM GREIN ON MAURITANIAN FRONTIER IN WHICH THERE WERE SEVERAL KILLED AND WOUNDED AMONG "OCCUPATION" FORCES. L'OPINION CLAIMS THAT

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SPANISH FORCES USED AIR POWER IN RECENT OPERATIONS AGAINST

GUERRILLAS.

2. DECEMBER 2 ARABIC-LANGUAGE AL ANBA, MOST OFFICIAL OF RABAT'S SEMI-OFFICIAL JOURNALS, QUOTES REPORT FROM SPANISH WIRE SERVICE EFE OF INCIDENT BETWEEN SPANISH ARMY AND MOROCCANS AT CEUTA ENCLAVE. ACCORDING REPORT, SPANISH PATROL IN ENCLAVE FIRED ON GROUP OF MOROCCANS WHO WERE PENETRATING ENCLAVE PERIMETER, KILLING TWO AND WOUNDING THREE OTHERS. MOROCCANS HAD NOT HEEDED ORDER TO HALT, AND EFE TERMED THEM SMUGGLERS. L'OPINION REPORTED INCIDENT IN MUCH MORE LURID TERMS, CLAIMING THAT FOUR DEAD AND SIX WOUNDED AND THAT THOSE INVOLVED WERE PURSUING NORMAL COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES.

3. SPANISH EMBASSY HERE CONFIRMS THAT THERE WERE INCIDENTS IN SAHARA ON NOVEMBER 27 AND AROUND NOVEMBER 11 AND THAT SOME DEATHS RESULTED FROM CLASHES. HOWEVER, NUMBER KILLED WAS SMALL FRACTION OF THAT REPORTED IN L'OPINION, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY, AND AIR POWER NEVER USED AGAINST GUERRILLAS. EMBASSY ALSO CONFIRMS CEUTA STORY AS REPORTED IN AL ANBA.

4. DESPITE FOREGOING, BOTH SPANISH EMBASSY AND MOROCCAN SOURCES QUERIED OVER WEEKEND DO NOT APPEAR TO BELIEVE THAT SITUATION IN SAHARA IS GREATLY CHANGED OR THAT LEVEL OF VIOLENCE THERE HAS RISEN SIGNIFICANTLY.

5. COMMENT: IT MAY BE THAT APPARENT INCREASE IN INCIDENTS IN SAHARA RESULTS FROM BETTER SAHARA LIBERATION FRONT PROPAGANDA APPARATUS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT FRONT IS NOW ISSUING COMMUNIQUE ON MORE OR LESS REGULAR BASIS IN ALGIERS, AND IT MAY BE THAT L'OPINION IS USING THESE AS GRIST FOR ITS MILL. FURTHER, MORE LIBERAL GOS POLICY VIS A VIS SAHARA NEWS MAY MEAN THAT MORE ITEMS ON UNREST IN REGION NOW APPEAR IN SPANISH PRESS.

6. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, SABOTAGE OF PHOSPHATE CONVEYOR BELT WAS ACHIEVEMENT FOR WHATEVER GROUP WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. IF, AS SPANISH EMBASSY HERE DOES NOT DENY, FRONT WAS BEHIND INCIDENT, IT MAY IN FACT BE THAT THAT GROUP IS GAINING STRENGTH AND WILL BE HEARD FROM MORE IN FUTURE.
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